

**PENNS VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 17, 2017**

PRESENT:

Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission

Centre Hall	Pat Krisch
Gregg Township	Doug Bierly
Haines Township	Daryl Schafer and Charlie Valentin
Miles Township	Ron Hough
Millheim Borough	Sharon Heckman
Penn Township	David Braucht
Potter Township	Ron Grove

Other:

Citizen	Cindy Wilson
Citizen	Jesse Grove
Centre County Planning and Community Development Office	Linda Marshall

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Grove called the April 17, 2017 meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Wilson asked for an update on Millheim Borough's action on the parking and alleyways in the downtown commercial district.

Ms. Heckman responded to Ms. Wilson's request by stating that Borough Council has accepted the engineering study, approving the one-way streets, and that the solicitor was authorized to advertise an ordinance amending codified ordinance Chapter 15, Motor Vehicles. She continued by stating that if Council approves the ordinance then it will go into effect.

In regard to parking, Ms. Heckman replied that Millheim Borough did what it was required to do, removing parking off of the south-side of the SR 45 in front of Fountain Park from Sugar Alley down to the bridge.

A question was raised as to whether or not there will be parking enforcement. Ms. Heckman stated that enforcement has gotten stricter and that Code Enforcement has also been ticketing on weekends. She added that the Pennsylvania State Police will ticket any vehicles violating the no parking restrictions. Ms. Heckman concluded by stating that there are on-going discussions on how to improve the enforcement.

Mr. Hough asked as to how the Borough determined how much the fines will be. Ms. Heckman replied that the fines were determined by the Vehicle Code. Mr. Hough followed up by asking if the Borough or the state receives the fines. Ms. Heckman stated that the Borough collects the fines.

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Ms. Heckman informed the citizens that PennDOT (Pennsylvania Department of Transportation) will re-align the center line of SR 45 as appropriate.

APPROVAL of MEETING NOTES

Mr. Grove called for additions or corrections to the March 20, 2017 meeting notes of the Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Hough moved to approve the March 20, 2017 meeting notes, as written. Mr. Bierly seconded the motion. The motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Kirsch read the Treasurer's Report. She stated that there is a balance of \$247.73 with one invoice paid in the amount of \$42.73 for the 2017 Meeting Schedule Legal Ad.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

No report.

REPORTS:

Centre Hall Borough

Ms. Kirsch reported that the Borough has cut down trees along Church Street and will be constructing new sidewalks.

Gregg Township

Mr. Bierly reported that Mr. Laron Horner, Township Road Master, is resigning on Friday, April 21, 2017. Mr. Bierly also noted that the Township advertised a proposed amusement tax for public comment. Mr. Schafer asked Mr. Bierly what the rate of calculation will be. Mr. Bierly stated that it will not exceed 5% of the ticket price with \$10 being the threshold. Mr. Grove commented that Potter Township's amusement tax does not have a ticket price, whereby, the ordinance goes into effect.

Haines Township

Mr. Schafer reported that the Township is getting closer to adopting its zoning ordinance. He noted that the most recent issue that the Township is addressing in the draft ordinance is medical marijuana regulations. Mr. Schafer added that this will also apply to the Township's Employee Handbook.

Other issues related to the draft ordinance reported by Mr. Schaffer were: residents' concerns, conditional use hearings and finding three members to serve on a zoning hearing board.

Mr. Schafer stated that the first draft zoning ordinance was very restrictive and also a very thick document. He noted that the new draft is one-quarter of its original thickness and is not as restrictive.

Mr. Schafer commented that zoning allows the Township to adopt ordinances based on zoning districts.

Miles Township

Mr. Hough reported that the Township is contracting with a firm to review the municipal ordinances.

Millheim Borough

Ms. Heckman stated that she had no additional report and noted that she provided an update on the parking and alleyways under Public Comment.

Penn Township

Mr. Braught announced that the township received a grant to complete the remainder of the work on the water line. He added that the Township will grind and re-surface Beaver Dam Road and that the Township hopes to get a grant for the road to Poe Valley. Mr. Bierly asked Mr. Braught for the name of the contractor for the Beaver Dam Road project. Mr. Braught replied that Hawbaker was the lowest bid.

Potter Township

Mr. Grove reported that the sewer project in Potters Mills is shovel-ready and ready to put out for bid, if there is any funding. Mr. Grove added that the Township did talk to their solicitor about the telecommunications provisions in their zoning ordinance, and he noted that the solicitor feels that their ordinance is strong enough.

Mr. Hough asked Mr. Bierly for an update on the Penns Valley Area School District's sewage disposal project. Mr. Bierly replied that the Gregg Township Board of Supervisors approved the conveyance of sewage to the Gregg Township Sewer Authority's sewage treatment system.

OLD BUSINESS

-Tri-Municipal Park and Recreation Committee Report

It was reported that the cell tower has been approved and that the Park Committee voted to hire Albertin/Vernon and Brian Auman to write a grant for the park improvements. The source of the matching funds will be generated from the cell tower lease and leasing the farmland.

-Regional Comprehensive Plan Implementation

-Updating the Demographics Chapter

Ms. Marshall distributed copies of the current Demographics Chapter in the Regional Comprehensive Plan as well as the Nittany Valley Joint Comprehensive Plan's update Demographic Chapter. The Commission members were asked to read both chapters before the May 15th meeting and provide input on the data sets as well as the format.

Ms. Marshall also provided an update on the internet discussion at the March 20th meeting. She informed the Commission that their recommendations/comments and concerns were relayed to the Planning Director and Assistant Director for consideration by the county.

Mr. Bierly noted that Windstream conducted a market survey at Gregg Township.

NEW BUSINESS

-Data Refresh Process Routes 322, 144 and 45

Mr. Zilla introduced himself as a staff person for the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO), working for the Centre Regional Planning Agency.

Mr. Zilla announced that the biggest news from the CCMPO is the allocation of \$3 million for the Data Refresh Process for the Route 322/144/45 Corridors project. He informed the Commission that the funds have been added to the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and that PennDOT will be hiring a consultant to conduct the data refresh process.

Mr. Zilla showed the Route 322/144/45 Corridors study area on the map. He explained that the most recent study in this area was known as the South Central Centre County Transportation Study (SCCCTS) which was active from 1999 to 2004. As part of SCCCTS, PennDOT collected data on items such as traffic volume, traffic flows, crash data, agricultural easements, wetlands, streams, etc., and then developed a needs analysis. Mr. Zilla stated that the last step in the process was mapping roadway alternatives, which resulted in three families of corridors. Mr. Zilla noted that no decision was made on a preferred alternative and that the project has been dormant since that time.

Mr. Zilla pointed out that the Route 322 Potters Mills Gap (PMG) project was able to move forward more easily since there is only one route to get through the gap. He informed the Commission that the last of three construction phases for the PMG project will begin in 2018.

Mr. Zilla commented that agricultural easements were a big issue in Potter Township as part of the SCCCTS project, and would have an impact on any future alternatives that may be studied. He added that the Centre County MPO Coordinating Committee commented that their preference is to narrow the down the number of alternatives that are studied in the future, compared to all the alignments developed for SCCCTS,

In May 2014, the CCMPO made a request to PennDOT to allocate funding to update the data collected for SCCCTS. PennDOT informed the CCMPO in January 2017 that \$3 million in funding was allocated for this purpose. Mr. Zilla noted that the work to be performed with the \$3 million will not be used to develop and evaluate proposed alignments.

Mr. Zilla stated that the CCMPO is hoping that the data collection work will be done this fall when Penn State University is in session, and before the Potters Mills Gap project is under construction.

Reporting on other CCMPO items, Mr. Zilla stated that the Coordinating Committee will have a policy discussion in June about advancing the Route 322/144/45 Corridors project and the I-99/I-80 Exit 161 Interchange project. Both projects were stopped in mid-2000. Mr. Zilla noted that the interchange project could move faster since the environmental clearance process has been completed.

Mr. Zilla explained that he cannot guarantee that any of the proposed SCCCTS alignments will be eliminated or advance in the future. He noted that he has been receiving many questions from property owners within the affected areas about whether the alignments will be studied in the new effort.

Mr. Hough asked if the Route 322/144/45 project will be funded using state liquid fuel monies. Mr. Zilla replied that the majority of this project will likely be funded with federal dollars. He added that the Route 322 PMG project is being funded with state dollars, which come from the same revenue source as liquid fuels funds. He said that I-99/I-80 Interchange project is better suited to advance with federal dollars.

A question was raised about the proposed \$5 vehicle registration fee that the Centre County Board of Commissioners is considering. Mr. Zilla stated that the fee would bring in approximately \$500,000 annually, and he added that PennDOT would allocate up to \$2 million in a dollar or dollar match if the county agrees to adopt the fee. He specified that the fee would only be collected on vehicles registered in Centre County.

Mr. Zilla commented that funds generated from the proposed \$5 vehicle registration fee will be used by the County leverage liquid fuel funds. One type of project that could be funded is local bridges. Mr. Zilla added that Mr. Mike Bloom, Centre County MPO staff, has been working on priorities for local bridges.

Mr. Schafer asked if the state will recommend a primary route for the Route 322/144/45 Corridors project. Mr. Zilla replied that he thinks that there will be a change as to how the preferred alignment is determined; however, PennDOT will still follow the federal project development process, which requires sound reasoning for eliminating alternatives. He commented that some of the SCCCTS alignments may be eliminated at the beginning of the process, such as the proposed routes that parallel Route 144 where acid bearing rock is a concern on Centre Hall Mountain. Mr. Zilla also noted that there are a lot more agricultural easements in place in Potter Township than 13 years ago.

Mr. Zilla commented that hopefully the process will not require as much detailed study of multiple alternatives as in the SCCCTS project.

-CCMPO Update

-Potters Mills Gap Project

Mr. Zilla informed the Commission that he will provide a Word file with web links from PennDOT for the PMG project. He explained that the MPO is not closely involved with the final design of the project. Mr. Zilla noted that there will be a roundabout at the Route 322 Westbound ramps at the Potters Mills Interchange, and that the ramps at this interchange will also provide access to local properties.

In terms of mitigation for impacts to historic and cultural resources, particularly the Penns/Brush Valley Rural Historic District, he informed the Commission that there is a story board posted on <https://www.paprojectpath.org/storymap.html> Ms. Marshall stated that the Commission had previously been provided with the link to the story board.

Mr. Zilla referred to the Rapid Bridge Replacement program, which is a public/private partnership for state bridge projects. He stated that the Route 45 bridge just west of the Village of Woodward in Haines Township will be constructed in summer 2018. Mr. Zilla noted that there are ten bridge projects under this program in Centre County with two located in Haines Township. The SR 45 bridge project includes a full bridge closure for a five week period. The official truck detour is SR 192 from Centre Hall to Lewisburg. Mr. Zilla hopes that everyone will get the word about the official detours. He commented that they anticipate that there will be unofficial detours that some will try to take, especially the truck traffic.

Mr. Zilla noted that the PennDOT design team for the PMG project will schedule a meeting for emergency service providers in May 2017. He asked that the representatives share this information with the local emergency service providers who serve their municipalities.

Mr. Hough asked if origin and destination (O/D) studies are conducted for truck traffic. Mr. Zilla replied that the last O/D study was done for SCCCTS in 1999, which including surveying large trucks (tri-axles and larger). He explained that the O/D study concluded that smaller vehicles were headed to the State College and Bellefonte areas and that the large tractor-trailer trucks were bound for I-80 West. Mr. Zilla commented that the truck traffic caused a conflict between Potter and Harris Townships as to where the trucks should be routed, even though the large trucks comprise 20% or less of the overall traffic stream on Route 322.

Mr. Zilla added that truck traffic patterns will be considered; however, he does not think that PennDOT will conduct another O/D study since there most likely will not be much in the way of changes in the traffic patterns.

In addition to the stoppage of work on the SCCCTS project, Mr. Zilla stated that the Route 322 Corridor O1 project in Centre and Clearfield Counties was also discontinued. The project would have connected Port Matilda to Woodland with a four-lane highway, and Mr. Zilla stated that the project, if completed, could have been a game changer regarding truck traffic patterns in Centre County.

Mr. Schafer asked if PennDOT has ever developed a build-out plan for all the major highway systems in the state. Mr. Zilla replied that although PennDOT just completed a new Long Range Transportation Plan, the final version did not include the type of information that Mr. Schafer asked about. Mr. Zilla added that PennDOT is not funding many large highway projects in the state because of fiscal constraints. Mr. Zilla added that just maintaining the Interstate system in the Commonwealth required a large investment, and that the current funding level is just not sufficient to meet all the needs.

INFORMATION ITEMS

No additional items were reported.

FOR GOOD OF THE ORDER

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mr. Bierly moved to adjourn the April 17, 2017 meeting of the Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Schafer seconded the motion. The motion carried.